



BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
(518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. _____
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

YOUR NAME: Cynthia Howk DATE: Dec., 1994
133 S. Fitzhugh St.
YOUR ADDRESS: Rochester, NY 14608 TELEPHONE: 546-7029
ORGANIZATION (if any): The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): Walter Cassebeer House
2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN/CITY: Greece VILLAGE: ---
3. STREET LOCATION: 252 Edgemere Drive
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐ b. private ☒
5. PRESENT OWNER: Joseph & Kim Coco ADDRESS: (same) Rochester, NY 14612
6. USE: Original: residence Present: residence
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐
Interior accessible: Explain private residence

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☐ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐
e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☐ other: vinyl siding
Roof=asphalt shingles. Foundation not visible
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☐
(if known) b. wood frame with light members ☒
c. masonry load bearing walls ☐
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☒ b. good ☐ c. fair ☐ d. deteriorated ☐
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒ b. moved ☐ if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____
(see continuation sheet)

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

"This is architect, Walter Cassebeer's house. It's kind of a strange house for an architect, as you see mostly garage doors from the street! The garage doors, however, are original (at least they haven't put in overhead doors!). The modern glass porch on the side and the modern door at the back have slightly compromised it. Looks like nice grounds with a brick wall. Let's keep this in the 'red' category - 'minus' for the siding." P.Malo

COLOR CODE



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☒ b. zoning ☐ c. roads ☐
d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐
f. other: erosion of site by lake (N. of house)
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☒ - attached
d. privy ☐ e. shed ☐ f. greenhouse ☐
g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☐
i. landscape features: deciduous trees & shrubs; coniferous shrubs
j. other: brick wall, martin (bird) house
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land ☐ b. woodland ☐
c. scattered buildings ☐
d. densely built-up ☒ e. commercial ☐
f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☒
h. other: adjacent to Lake Ontario shoreline

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

(see continuation sheet)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

(see continuation sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: c. 1926
- ARCHITECT: Walter Cassebeer
- BUILDER: not determined

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

(see continuation sheet)

21. SOURCES: (see continuation sheet)

22. THEME: residential

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11c.

The exterior has been covered with vinyl siding (over the original wood clapboards and stucco veneer).

Contemporary casement windows have been added to the north elevation (1st and 2nd stories).

One-story enclosed porch additions (c. 1970s-80s) with contemporary casement windows have been added to the northwest and northeast corners of the house.

The original library has been remodeled and is now part of the large, modern kitchen.

The original stone wall, located close to the roadway, has been removed; it was originally constructed by Walter Cassebeer.

Contemporary (c. 1970s-80s) brick garden walls have been constructed to the west and south of the house.

18. This c. 1926 Colonial Revival house is a two-and-one-half story residence with gabled roof, vinyl siding (over wood shingles and stucco) and rectangular plan.

Designed to fit on this narrow lot, the house was built with its main facade actually facing east (to the side), while its side (end gable with garage doors) faces the roadway to the south.

The plan of this Colonial Revival house is basically rectangular with a second-story overhang on the west elevation. Fenestration is irregular and features mostly 6/6, double-hung sash. A number of contemporary casement windows have been added to the north elevation (at the northwest corner). Louvered wood shutters are located on fourteen of the windows.

The facade (east elevation) features a recessed entrance flanked by original "carriage type" lantern lights (designed by Walter Cassebeer). Stucco walls are located here by the kitchen and front porch. A gabled dormer is located on the 2nd story. A 2-1/2-story, gabled section extends out (east) from the facade at the northeast corner. A contemporary, glassed-in porch addition is attached to the northeast corner of the house.

18. continued

The south elevation (facing the street) features a double gable end, 6/6 windows and a finial on the front gable. The entrance to the two-car garage is located here. It features a shed-roofed overhang and the original hinged, garage doors. The doors are hung in pairs; they feature 8-paned, upper windows, a solid-paneled lower section and original curved, metal door handles.

The west elevation features two brick chimneys and a shed-roofed dormer on the west slope of the roof. The second story extends out over the first, overhanging the wall below. A decorative, curved bracket and wood pendants are located on the overhang of this elevation. A square window bay with multi-paned glazing is located just below the overhanging second story. At the northwest corner of the west elevation, a contemporary (c. 1970s-80s) 1-story addition with casement windows has been constructed.

When constructed c. 1926, the entire house was lined with cork for insulation. The exterior wood shingles were always painted white with dark green trim by the Cassebeers. The interior included a living room, dining room, large hall, kitchen, library, six bedrooms, two porches, and a workshop. There are two fireplaces (living room and library). The floors were oak and the woodwork was custom made. The attic had one "finished" room (with plaster walls). A 3,000-gallon oil tank was in the basement.

The living room has a "secret" cupboard to the left of the fireplace. The original kitchen had a built-in refrigerator and a milkbox that was accessible from the back porch. It also had a vegetable storage area whose window opened to the outside to let in cool air (to keep produce fresh).

The yard, although not large, includes a distinctive, wood martin (bird) house located atop a tall pole at the northwest corner of the property. This was designed and constructed by Sabey Cassebeer, son of Walter Cassebeer.

The present brick garden walls are contemporary (c. 1960s-80s). They are located south of the house (lining the sidewalk) and west of the house (near the property line). An original stone wall, erected by Walter Cassebeer, has been removed. It was located closer to the street (Edgemere Drive has been moved farther south since the house was constructed in the 1920s).

20. Built c. 1926, this house is architecturally significant as an example of early 20th-century Colonial Revival architecture in the town. It is also architecturally significant as an example of the work of Rochester architect, Walter Cassebeer, who resided here from its construction, c. 1926, until his death in 1963.

The house is historically significant for its associations with the early 20th-century development of Edgemere Drive as one of the most distinctive residential areas in the county.

With its gabled roof, rectangular plan, 6/6 windows and second-story overhang, this house is a distinctive example of the Colonial Revival style popular in the early 20th-century. The surviving original garage doors are particularly notable, as most garages have installed modern overhead doors.

First "re-discovered" in the late 1870s, the Colonial Revival style gained its greatest popularity in the early 1900s. It reflects the entire rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic seaboard. The style was widely popularized through magazines and architectural publications, such as the "White Pine Series." Colonial Revival houses built in the years between 1915 and 1935 reflect these influences by more closely resembling their 18th century prototypes. The economic depression of the 1930s, World War II, and changing postwar fashions led to a simplification of the style in the 1940s and '50s.

This house, with its second-story overhang, is a subtype loosely based on Postmedieval English models, commonly built with the second story extended slightly outward to overhang the wall below. The design was relatively rare until the 1930s, when stylized, side-gabled examples (called Garrison Colonial houses) became very popular. These persist into the 1950s. Detailing includes masonry-veneered first stories with wooden wall claddings and decorative pendants or other Postmedieval details. This is seen in the design of #252.

It is related that the Cassebeers wanted to have a residence that resembled a "Pennsylvania Dutch farmhouse." This house at #252 is what Walter Cassebeer designed to meet that requirement. The second-story overhang is somewhat reminiscent of the German-style barns seen in Pennsylvania.

The 1902 county map shows this area to be part of the 91-acre B.G. Bennett parcel. No road existed here, only the Rochester, Charlotte and Manitou Railroad track along the

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shoreline.

The 1924 county map shows Edgemere Drive with lots laid out along the north side. This site is indicated as Lot 24. The 1930 suburban directory (the first published) shows this house and lists Walter H. and Kathryn Cassebeer (sic) at this address (#250); he is listed as an architect.

Interviews with Walter Cassebeer's daughter, Ann Cassebeer Weld and his daughter-in-law, Emily Cassebeer included questions about the date of construction for this house. Ann Weld thought that they moved in before 1925. Further discussion indicated that the date was "about 1926."

Walter Cassebeer (1884-1963) was born in Rochester. He received his education at the University of Rochester, Columbia University and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, France. After apprenticing in New York City, he opened his own office here in 1914 and practiced independently until about 1935. He did some very fine residential work (several other Edgemere Drive houses are also by him). He later worked for the firm of Kaelber and Wassdorp, then Faragher and Macomber. Mr. Cassebeer was also a well-known artist in the field of lithography and pencil sketching. His hobby was lithography and he was known nationally for his prints. His drawings of Rochester architecture and local scenes are notable. He also recorded a number of early 19th-century western New York buildings by means of measured drawings. He received the University of Rochester's Lillian Fairchild prize in recognition of his contributions as an artist.

Walter Cassebeer designed several other houses on Edgemere Drive. This area is shown as the "Slater tract" on the 1924 and 1959 maps. He designed the Ben Slater house, about 3 or 4 houses from the beginning of Edgemere Drive. Designed c. 1920, it is a white "farm-house type" with a swimming pool on the right. It was the first house built on that part of Edgemere Drive. Slater was medical director at Kodak.

Next to the Slater house is the John Morris house, a white Colonial Revival, also a Cassebeer design. He also may have designed the house to the right of the Slaters - the Allen house - a very large fieldstone house (breakwall is deteriorating & erosion endangers the house).

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20. continued

Upon Walter Cassebeer's death in 1963, his wife sold the house and moved into an apartment at 1600 East Avenue in the city.

Two subsequent owners have resided here since the Cassebeer family.

21. See final report for bibliography;

phone interviews with Emily Cassebeer in Rochester, New York and Ann Cassebeer Weld in Windham, New Hampshire.

Landmark Society Presents Cassebeer Drawings and Prints



THE INTERIOR of Humphrey's Bookstore on Spring St., original lithograph by Walter H. Cassebeer.

By Betsy Brayer

An exhibition and sale of original lithographs by Walter Cassebeer, all relating to the Rochester area, opens Oct. 17 in the Ward Gallery of Sibley's Downtown.

The collection of 303 prints was given to the Landmark Society recently by Mr. Cassebeer's widow, Kathryn. The society is retaining one print of each of the 29 images for its permanent collection. The remaining 274 will be sold at appraised value, the net proceeds will establish the Walter Cassebeer Memorial Fund for the Landmark Society to be added to the Landmark Revolving Fund in accordance with the wishes of the donor and her son, Sabey Cassebeer.

One of each of the prints will be displayed in the Ward Gallery, Oct. 17-25.

* * *

Artist, architect, bibliophile, horticulturalist, antiquarian, woodworker, and avid researcher, Walter H. Cassebeer left his mark on this community in many ways. Perhaps the most enduring and influential are the drawings and lithographic prints which sensitively record an era of Rochester's history. Their immediacy springs from the fact that Mr. Cassebeer often carried the heavy lithographic stones around with him, along with a specially constructed tripod, so that he could record scenes directly without intervening sketches or

the time lapse of returning to a studio.

Beyond a fine drafting skill and good sense of design, his drawings and prints exhibit a personal style, particularly seen in the quality of line as it describes the old buildings he loved. He rarely recorded an important building, preferring to invest some lowly shack with the dignity of architecture. While he occasionally experimented with etchings and line engravings, the medium of lithography naturally produced the light and airy qualities he wished to convey.

He was an architect by profession. Born in Rochester, in 1884, he was educated at East High School, Mechanics Institute, the University of Rochester (1904-06), and the

Columbia University School of Architecture (1906-08). He then studied art and architecture for four years at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, unusual training at a time when most architects learned their trade via the apprentice system.

He was employed in New York City, 1913-14, by Everett Waid, Welles Bosworth, and Charles A. Platt, then dean of American architects. Upon returning to Rochester, he opened an office at 84 Exchange Street, now the site of the Community War Memorial, where he practiced structural and landscape architecture until World War 2. From 1919 to 1924 he served as Zone Expert to the City of Rochester. During the war he was assigned to help build Sampson Naval Base on Seneca Lake. Later, he joined the firm of Kaelber and Waasdorp, and still later, Faragher and Macomber. He was admitted to the American Institute of Architects in 1921, and was treasurer and president of the Central New York Chapter of the AIA, 1932-36.

Among area buildings that Cassebeer had total responsibility for, that is, he was the primary designer as well as the construction supervisor, are the Greek Orthodox Church at 962 East Avenue; the chapel of Third Presbyterian Church, East Avenue and Meigs Street; the Carmelite Monastery on Jefferson Road, many houses in the Slater tract on Edgemere Drive; the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity house of the University of Rochester; the interior refurbishing of Christ Episcopal Church, East Avenue; and the interior of Blessed Sacrament Church on Oxford St. He was intensely interested in Gothic churches, researching them in France and sketching them often both in Europe and this country.

He was awarded the Rochester Society of Ar-

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chitects' first Certificate of Merit in 1934 for his design of the Doyle-Texaco gas station on East Avenue.

His landscape projects apparently stemmed from a passionate interest in horticulture rather than from any formal training as a landscape architect. The projects included work on Durand Eastman Park, the garden of the Henry Lomb house, and the garden of the E.N.S. Rowel house in Batavia. Over the years he was associated with Alling S. DeForest, Francis H. Gott, and Harry Boone.

As an original member of the Landmark Society board, Mr. Cassebeer brought a knowledge of materials, structure, and engineering to a heady group of preservationists congratulating themselves on just have saved the Campbell-Whittlesey House from the wreckers' ball. "Walter took the whole board on a walk around the west side of the house to see how the bricks were flaking and other deteriorations," another board member recalls. "He pointed out the absolute necessity of getting at the physical structure first and implanted a respect for the nature of materials and how they wore."

A walk through the Third Ward with Walter Cassebeer as guide was a chance to see it in many new ways. He would point out the myriad variations with a single style, say, the Greek Revival. Then he would take the visitor to Humphrey's Bookstore, (the interior of which he recorded in one of his best loved lithographs) because he considered it such an important institution and surviving link with the past. Books were his friends as much as buildings were.

He served for many years on the board of the Memorial Art Gallery and was always a member of both the Library and Prints and Drawings Committees. His love of books, knowledge of printmaking and how to put together a good small representative library based on his own, and his personal friendships with publishers of architecture books, made his services invaluable. He exhibited often at the Gallery, not only lithographs but also architectural renderings and plans for buildings and gardens. He won first prize more than once in the annual "Pictureseque

Rochester" exhibition and in 1932 won the coveted Lillian Fairchild Award, given for a meritorious work of art, for his lithographs of Rochester and western New York.

The skills and tools of woodworking he inherited from his grandfather, Wilhelm Wolff, a cabinetmaker who emigrated from Germany in the late 1850's.

During the 1930's he was supervising architect and resource person for the Historic American Buildings' Survey of local houses of unusual historic interest. Among those recorded in measured drawings were the Stone-Tolan and Campbell-Whittlesey Houses (both now Landmark Society museums), the Olive Culver House, the Granger Homestead in Canandaigua, and Woodside, home of the Rochester Historical Society. In addition he did at least 160 measured drawings of details -- doors, mantels, gardens, windows, entrances, etc. -- of historic houses in the upstate New York communities of Binghamton, Cazenovia, Jerusalem, Victor, Ogden, Sacketts Harbor, Charlotte, Smithville, Vestal, Henrietta, Riga, Seneca Falls, Lodi, Henderson Harbor, Gypsum, Geneva, Palmyra, Pittsford, Webster, Holcomb, Mertensia, Honeoye, Mt. Morris, Glens Falls, Bergen, and York, as well as out of state communities, and, of course, his own Rochester.

A taskmaster for details, he was keenly sensitive to the aesthetics of color balance and to design that was not only correct in detail but pleasing to the eye.

A certain formality of manner and a direct, substantive way of speaking, employing

few adjectives, was sometimes mistaken for gruffness. That impression was dispelled when one glimpsed his boyish delight in his books or his collection of early and rare peg lamps. This concealed warmth was never more evident than when Walter Cassebeer produced an atypical, inferior design so that a competing design by a younger architect of the same firm would have to be chosen.

Cassebeer continued
1980.

